



The Friends of Tewkesbury Abbey

**Annual Report -
Spring 2025**



The Friends' Prayer

O God who for the glory of this thine earthly house
didst move thy servant Edward Pountney Gough to found
the fellowship of the Friends of Tewkesbury Abbey,
wherein we are gathered
faithfully to protect and adorn its beauty;
grant, we beseech thee, that,
we being zealous in the service of thy sanctuary,
all who worship here may perceive the excellence of thy majesty
and be filled with the fruits of thy Holy Spirit.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord who liveth and reigneth with thee
and the same Spirit, one God, world without end.
Amen

Our front and rear cover pictures illustrate our theme of 'Change'

Front Photograph

The winter solstice marks the end of the astronomic old year and the start of the new

Photo credit: Jack Boskett

But how much change has happened in this scene? The building of a Monastery with its Abbey Church, the addition of a fine Lady Chapel, the Battle of Tewkesbury, the demolition of the Monastery and the Lady Chapel to name some of the bigger events, but the Abbey has been the centre of events that have marked dramatic change in the lives of countless individuals over the nine centuries it has been here.

Thanks to Dr Ian White for the provision of other images used in this report.

The Friends of Tewkesbury Abbey

Annual Report 2025

Incorporating accounts for the year ended December 2024

CONTENTS

Friends' Council & Officers	4
Chairman's Letter	5
Mr Graham Finch : An Appreciation	6
Friends' Events	7
Membership Updates	9
Friends in Need	9
Agenda for the AGM	10
Proposals for Revision to the Friends' Constitution	10
Treasurer's Report	13
Financial Statements	14
Minutes of the AGM in 2024	15
Friends' Meeting Prayer	18
Programme for Friends' Festival 2025	19

The Council and Officers of The Friends of Tewkesbury Abbey 2024-25

<i>President:</i>	The Bishop of Gloucester
<i>Vice Presidents:</i>	The Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire
	The Bishop of Tewkesbury
	The Archdeacon of Gloucester
	The Archdeacon of Cheltenham
	Mr G Finch (<i>from July 2024</i>)
<i>Chairman:</i>	Mr G Finch (<i>to June 2024</i>) The Revd C E Whitney (<i>from June 2024</i>)
<i>Vice Chairman</i>	Dr I White
<i>Council 2024-2027</i>	Mr R Bellairs
	Mr J Goom
	Mrs L Parsons
	<i>Vacancy</i>
<i>Council 2023-2026:</i>	Mrs M Beagley
	Mrs S Coulton
	Mrs K Feighan (<i>resigned April 2025</i>)
	Mr G Hill
<i>Council 2022-2025:</i>	Mr N Bennett (<i>Honorary Treasurer</i>)
	Dr A Crowther
	Mrs S Lancelot
	Mr RHM Sweet
<i>Ex-Officio:</i>	The Vicar of Tewkesbury, The Revd Canon Nick Davies
<i>The Churchwardens:</i>	Mr P Charman
	Mrs N Oakes
<i>PCC Representatives:</i>	Mrs E Charman
	Dr J Lancelot
<i>Secretary & Administrator:</i>	Mrs KE Vincent
<i>Bankers:</i>	Lloyds plc, High Street, Tewkesbury, GL20 5RZ
<i>Independent Examiner:</i>	MAG Bull BSc FCA, BPC Partners Limited, Chartered Accountants 3 Royal Crescent, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL50 3DA
Postal Address: c/o Tewkesbury Abbey Office, Church Street, Tewkesbury, GL20 5RZ The Friends of Tewkesbury Abbey is a Registered Charity, No. 211236, governed by a constitution created in 1933, amended 2 nd July 1989, and further amended 7 th July 2013	

Chairman's Letter

Dear Friends,

I believe that this year will be seen as a year of change and consolidation for the Friends, when we have taken a step back to look at where we are and what we are about. This has become something of a necessity, as it has been brought on by the revised and tightened requests and requirements of the Charity Commissioners, the need to work out where we stand vis-a-vis the comparatively new Abbey Foundation, our own financial resources and the general financial climate.

Early on, it became evident that there had to be three priorities in the year: the first to revise the Constitution of the Friends; the second to try to resolve the Young Friends situation and the third to try to improve the numbers of Friends. As the year progressed, it also became clear that the administration of the Friends required examination, given that our tireless Secretary/Administrator had almost completely fulfilled the variety of tasks that she had been originally asked to look at, such as the Friends' website, legal requirements, work on our database and so on and felt that she did not have much development still to do.



Mr Nigel Bennett, Treasurer, and The Revd Charles Whitney, Chairman, at the Annual General Meeting, June 2024

A working party was formed to consider the Constitution and another to consider the Friends' Administration, the results of which you will find detailed elsewhere in this Annual Report. These involved additional meetings for all those members of Council who were involved, and I am grateful to them and especially to Dr Ian White, our Vice Chairman, and Gareth Hill, a member of Council, who did much additional work as leaders of the two working parties.

It became very clear that despite considerable efforts in trying to recruit, no-one was prepared to lead the Young Friends. The Council reluctantly came to the conclusion that the Young Friends would have to be disbanded, at least for the time being. In any case, they had not met for a number of years.

Recruitment has at least kept up with our losses through death and, occasionally, people not renewing their subscription. Membership which began the year at 453 in total now stands at 461. I asked members of Council to try to recruit one person each – and some managed it – but there is room for many more! Our Abbey is desperate for as much support as we can give it.

All work and no play would indeed make the Friends a dull place to be. The year has been lightened by Graham Finch's richly deserved elevation to being appointed a Vice President; the visit to the Abbey by HRH the Duchess of Gloucester last September, who I had the honour of meeting; the fun of the Abbey Christmas Fair and the Friends' stall at it – not forgetting Janice Smail's valuable work in looking after The Friends' Table for the rest of the year; Ellie March's scholarly Autumn Lecture "Beyond the Abbey Church" which examined Tewkesbury's medieval monastic precinct; Jim Budd's fascinating Fitzhamon lecture on the Abbey Quire glass – with thanks to Graham Finch for arranging it, and finally anticipating the trip to Witley Court planned for the 1st July – with thanks to Rafael Bellairs and the Events Committee.

At the AGM, we shall be saying goodbye to Dr Andrew Crowther and Hugh Sweet who are both stepping down from Council after many, many years helping to run the Friends. For many years Andrew was Vice Chairman and Hugh was Hon. Treasurer and we must warmly thank them for the considerable contribution that they both made to the Friends.

We shall also be saying goodbye to Sylvia Lancelot who has come to the end of her six year 'stint'. on Council. We hope very much that after a year's rest she will consider rejoining Council in 2026. Members of Council are particularly grateful to her – and to Sue Coulson and Linda Parsons - for greeting us at the beginning of each Council Meeting with tea, coffee and cake! Sadly, Council has also said goodbye to Karen Feighan who, for personal reasons, has had to give up her membership of Council. We are pleased and grateful that she has agreed to help with some of our on-going administrative tasks.

Finally, on a personal note, I would wish to warmly thank members of Council for their support during the year but particularly the Vice-Chairman, Dr Ian White, our Hon. Treasurer, Nigel Bennett and our Secretary/Administrator, Karen Vincent. Their help has been invaluable and they were forever supportive and encouraging.

With every good wish,

Charles Whitney

The Revd CE Whitney, Chairman

Mr Graham Finch - An Appreciation

This is the text of the appreciation given by Dr Andrew Crowther at the AGM of the Friends on 29th June 2024 at the time when Mr Graham Finch stepped down from being the Chairman.

Ten years ago, when I helped to persuade Graham to take on the role as Chairman of the Friends, it must have felt like a formidable task. To follow in the footsteps of Anne Cadbury could have been difficult, but the Friends were also facing the need for important changes in a changing and challenging world. I had been Vice Chairman for a number of years but had always said that I had no wish to proceed to the Chair. Graham did agree to take on the chairmanship and so started a remarkable ten years. Under his leadership and skill he has brought the Friends into a new era. The need for a more businesslike approach to an organisation like ours was essential. That is not to say that as an organisation the Friends had failed to be assertive and businesslike, but a new approach was needed. We did not have to wait long. Having been elected in July 2014 his ideas appeared in September in a document of 10 items presented in an appropriately scholarly way as 'Quo Imus', which translates as "Where are we going?" And so we started on a new journey.



Mrs Karen Vincent, Friends' Administrator, presents gifts to the outgoing Chairman, Mr Graham Finch, at the AGM June 2024

One thing we discovered was that our new chairman had very positive ideas which he was able, as all good teachers should be able, to explain his ideas clearly and in detail. This is an approach that we have come to respect from Graham over the last ten years. His presentation of challenging projects had a carefully thought out approach to the many problems. His reasoning, as explained at Council Meetings, seemed logical and effortless, but must have involved many hours of painstaking discussions and fact finding. I was privileged to have served as his Vice-Chair for most of those ten years but I was rarely more than supportive to his efforts.

Graham, you have been an inspiration to the Friends, you have weathered the storm of Covid when most activities ceased, you have set up several new committees and made sure that they had all the statutory backing that they needed, and above all you have been endlessly positive and cheerful where others might have faltered. Thank you for the ten inspiring years of your leadership.

Dr Andrew Crowther

Friends' 2024 Events Round-Up: A Year of Heritage, Scholarship and Fellowship

The Friends of Tewkesbury Abbey enjoyed a rich and engaging programme of events throughout 2024, reflecting their continued commitment to the preservation, study, and celebration of one of England's most treasured ecclesiastical buildings. From expert lectures to a summer outing, the year offered members a variety of opportunities to deepen their understanding of the Abbey and its wider historical setting.

July 1 – Friends' Visit to Worcester Cathedral

On Monday, July 1, the Friends visited Worcester Cathedral for a special summer excursion. The visit included a guided tour of the cathedral's remarkable features, such as its Norman crypt, medieval cloisters, and the tomb of King John. Members gained new insights into the connections between Worcester and Tewkesbury, and the day offered a wonderful chance for fellowship in another of England's great religious landmarks.

October 8 – Friends' Autumn Lecture

Dr Ellie March: Beyond the Abbey Church: An Examination of Tewkesbury's Medieval Monastic Precinct

The Autumn Lecture, was delivered by Dr Ellie March, the Friends' Scholar and historian from the University of Exeter. Her lecture examined the wider layout and life of the Abbey's medieval monastic community. Dr March's research offered a fresh perspective on how the precinct functioned beyond the church building itself, illuminating the daily life and spatial dynamics of the medieval site.



Dr Ellie March delivering the Friends' Autumn Lecture

The recording of the lecture is available to view in the 'Friends' Only' section of the Friends' website.

April 12 – The Fitzhamon Lecture

Jim Budd ACR: The Survival and the Restoration of the 14th Century Stained Glass in the Presbytery at Tewkesbury Abbey



Mr Jim Budd

To end our calendar of Events, the Fitzhamon Lecture was delivered by Jim Budd ACR, a leading stained-glass conservator. His talk provided a compelling overview of the techniques and challenges involved in preserving the Abbey's medieval glass. Attendees were given look at the intricate process of conservation that ensures these historic windows remain a vibrant part of the Abbey's heritage.



Jim Budd and an assistant inspect the stained glass at the east end

In sum, 2024/5 proved to be a year of inspiring scholarship, shared exploration, and deepened appreciation for Tewkesbury Abbey's unique place in history. The Friends of Tewkesbury Abbey continue to play a vital role in fostering community and supporting the Abbey's ongoing story.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the Friends of Tewkesbury Abbey. Your involvement continues to make all the difference in preserving and celebrating the Abbey's rich heritage.

We're delighted to invite you to this year's Friends' Day Trip, taking place on Tuesday, 1st July 2025, following our Annual General Meeting. This summer, we'll be heading to the stunning Witley Court, where you'll enjoy a private Crypt Tour in the Church and the rare opportunity to hear our very own James Lancelot perform on the organ. The day promises beauty, history, and music in equal measure.

Hot off the press! —we're thrilled to announce that Professor Martin Heale has been confirmed to deliver the 2026 Fitzhamon Lecture, thanks to the efforts of our Vice President Graham Finch. Professor Heale is a distinguished historian of late medieval monasticism, and we look forward to an unforgettable evening of insight and scholarship.

We are excited for another year of fellowship, learning, and exploration together. Thank you for being a vital part of the Friends of Tewkesbury Abbey community—we look forward to seeing you soon!

Mr Rafael Bellairs, Chair of The Friends of Tewkesbury Abbey Events Committee

The Friends' Website

<https://www.friendsoftewkesburyabbey.org.uk> is the place to go to

- Purchase tickets to Friends' events
- Pay your subscription or make a donation
- Complete a Gift Aid Declaration
- Access EXCLUSIVE articles, videos, audio and photographs 'Just for Friends'



Do visit and register online for full member access to the resources on the site.

Membership Updates

The Friends have welcomed the following new members during 2024:

Life members

Mrs PA Meath Baker
Mr Geoff Simpson

Mr Matthew Clayton
Mrs Kathleen Standing

Mr James Kemp

Annual members

Mr Christopher Atwood
Miss Jennie Clifford
Mr R Goddard
Mrs Brenda Kimmins
Mrs Hazel Mayne
Mrs Jackie Parrington

Mr Allan Burt
The Revd David Coulton
Mr John Halstead
Mrs Patricia Mace
Mrs Ruth Odell
Mrs JoyPegg

Br Clement OC
Mr Charles Gillams
Mrs Lynn Holder
Mr Alan Mayne
Mr Huw Owen
Mrs Erna Perry

We also remember those Friends who died, or whose deaths were notified, during 2024:

Mrs Marjorie Asprey
Mr William Evans
Lady Muriel Menzies
Miss KJ Rogers
Mr Richard Turner

Mr Malachy Cornwell-Kelly
Mr Michael Hake
Miss Joan Nicholls
Mrs Sylvia Simmonds
Miss VM Warner

Mr Anthony Day
Mr Victor Hoare
Mrs CM Paternoster
Mr Michael Spencer
Miss Mary Woolley

Friends In Need

For many years, the Friends have benefited from excellent administrative support provided by Karen Vincent, but the time has come to try to spread the load and to come up with a support system that doesn't rely on one person doing so much.

A recent review of the Friends' administrative arrangements came up with a proposal that would both deliver the necessary support to keep the charity running efficiently, whilst also providing opportunities for more Friends, as willing volunteers, to become directly involved. A period of handover will be provided for all of the tasks. The list of opportunities is available to download from the Friends' website via the 'Documents' button on the homepage, look for 'Friends in Need'.

If you think that you, as an individual or as part of a small team, can offer the time and skills needed to support the Friends, we would love to hear from you: drop an email to admin@friendsoftewkesburyabbey.org.uk

Mr Gareth Hill, convenor of the Administration Review Working Group

Agenda for the Annual General Meeting Sunday 29th June 2025 at 2pm in the Parish Hall

The Friends' Meeting Prayer
Apologies and Opening Remarks
Minutes of the AGM held on 2nd July 2024
Chairman's Report
Proposed amendments to the Constitution of The Friends
Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair
Election of Treasurer
Election of Council Members
Appointment of Examiners
Treasurer's Report and Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2024
Vicar's News
Any Other Business
Date of Festival and AGM 2026 – 22 June (*tbc*)

The Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer are elected by the Friends at each AGM. Council Members are elected to serve a three year term, and one third are elected each year. Those eligible to stand for election are any member of The Friends of Tewkesbury Abbey and the electorate are those present at the AGM. Nomination forms are available from the Friends' website and the Secretary.

Proposed Amendments to the Constitution of The Friends of Tewkesbury Abbey

Two key factors have prompted the proposed changes to our Constitution: the establishment of the Tewkesbury Abbey Foundation in 2019, and the latest guidance from the Charity Commission.

The primary purpose of the Friends is clearly articulated in The Friends' Prayer (see page 2). For over 90 years, the Friends have dedicated themselves to preserving the fabric of the Abbey, ensuring it remains in good condition for future generations.

With the formation of the Foundation—whose objectives include supporting Mission and Ministry, Music and Liturgy, and Maintenance and Development—it has become increasingly important to clarify the distinct roles of these two bodies.

The proposed changes will make it clear that the Friends' core objective is to provide funding for major projects that focus on the repair of the Abbey's fabric and the enhancement of its interior beauty. This clarification not only reflects our historical mission but also ensures that we continue to complement, rather than duplicate, the work of the Foundation.

The role of a Charity Trustee has changed, and strengthened, considerably over the years and the Council has reviewed its compliance with Charity Commission Guidance and made efforts to align accordingly. Whilst some of these areas (for example Safeguarding and Data Protection) are legal requirements, others are best practice suggestions and covered by the Constitution. The proposed changes to the number of Trustees, and balance

between elected and ex-officio, gender language used, and timescale for notifications are the result of this element to the review.

The changes have been approved at a meeting of the Council of the Friends in February 2025 and, separately, by the Parochial Church Council in March 2025. The final step of their approval and adoption, is a vote at the AGM.

Dr Ian White, convenor of Constitution Review Working Group

In the table below proposed changes to the 2014 Constitution are shown in red, which includes indicating text which is to be removed. Amended text in the proposed change is shown in blue. A document giving the full text of the 2014 Constitution alongside the full text of the 2025 Proposed Constitution is available to download from the Friends' website via the 'Documents' button on the homepage.

Section	2014 Constitution	Proposed Change 2025
I	Purpose of The Friends, and relation to Parochial Church Council	Purpose of The Friends, and relation to Parochial Church Council
I.1	The Parochial Church Council is the body responsible for the care, maintenance, preservation and insurance of the fabric of the Abbey and the goods and ornaments thereof, and has the ultimate control of all work done in relation to these matters.	The Parochial Church Council is the body responsible for the care, maintenance, preservation and insurance of the fabric of the Abbey and the goods and ornaments thereof, and has the ultimate control of all work done in relation to these matters.
I.2	The purpose of the Friends of Tewkesbury Abbey is to assist in maintaining the fabric of the Abbey, and its services and activities , and in adorning it and preserving it, together with its furnishings, vestments and ornaments, for posterity.	The purpose of the Friends of Tewkesbury Abbey is to assist in maintaining the fabric of the Abbey, and in adorning it and preserving it, together with its furnishings, vestments and ornaments, for posterity.
I.3	The Friends of Tewkesbury Abbey shall also be free to devote a part of their funds to the preservation and improvement of the properties forming part of the ancient possessions of the Monastery now vested in the Trust known as the Abbey Lawn Trust, provided that the ultimate control of the use to which such monies are put remains with the Trustees.	
4.4	It shall be authorised to make grants to the Parochial Church Council, and for other appropriate charitable purposes connected with the Abbey and its environs	It shall be authorised to make grants to the Parochial Church Council.
4.5	The Council shall consist of:	The Council shall consist of:
4.5.1	not more than twelve members elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Friends.	not more than nine members elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Friends.
4.5.2	the Vicar and the Churchwardens for the time	the Vicar and one of the Churchwardens as ex-

	being as ex-officio as ex-officio members two members nominated by the Parochial Church Council.	officio members. one ex-officio member nominated by the Parochial Church Council.
4.5.3 4.5.4	the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, who shall be Council members in addition to the maximum number of elected members set out in paragraph 4.5.1; and, when complete, the Council shall comprise no more than 19 members.	the Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer, who shall be Council members in addition to the maximum number of elected members set out in paragraph 4.5.1; and, when complete, the Council shall comprise no more than 15 members.
6.1	Not less than twenty-eight clear days before the day of the Annual General Meeting, any two members may give to the Secretary a notice or notices in writing, signed by them, nominating any member or members of the Friends as a member or members or officer or officers of the Council, and specifying the name and address of the candidate or candidates. With such proposals there shall be enclosed the signed consent of such candidate or candidates to serve on the Council in the event of election	Not less than fourteen clear days before the day of the Annual General Meeting, any two members may give to the Secretary a notice or notices in writing, signed by them, nominating any member or members of the Friends as a member or members or officer or officers of the Council, and specifying the name and address of the candidate or candidates. With such proposals there shall be enclosed the signed consent of such candidate or candidates to serve on the Council in the event of election, and declaration of their eligibility to serve as a Charity Trustee.
6.3	Members of the Council, with the exception of the Chair and Vice-Chair, may serve a maximum of two terms, of up to three years per term. A member of the Council who has served one term shall be eligible for re-election, but a member of the Council who has served two continuous terms will not be eligible to be re-appointed or re-elected as a member of the Council until one year after his/her retirement at an AGM. For the avoidance of doubt, the provisions of this paragraph shall not apply to ex officio members of the Council.	Members of the Council, with the exception of the Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer, may serve a maximum of two terms, of up to three years per term. A member of the Council who has served one term shall be eligible for re-election, but a member of the Council who has served two continuous terms will not be eligible to be re-appointed or re-elected as a member of the Council until one year after his/her retirement at an AGM. For the avoidance of doubt, the provisions of this paragraph shall not apply to ex officio members of the Council.
8.2	If the Patron is present, he shall be invited to take the Chair. If the Patron is not present, the President, or the most senior Vice-President present shall be invited to take the Chair. If none of the Dignitaries is present, the Chairman of the Council shall take the Chair.	If the Patron is present, s/he shall be invited to take the Chair. If the Patron is not present, the President, or the most senior Vice-President present shall be invited to take the Chair. If none of the Dignitaries is present, the Chair of the Council shall take the Chair.
10.1	Each Friend shall pay at least the minimum annual subscription. A single donation shall entitle Life Membership. Each Life Member shall receive a card of enrolment.	Each Friend shall pay at least the minimum annual subscription (exemptions may be granted at the discretion of the Council). Each Life Member shall receive a card of enrolment.

Treasurer's Report

The Abbey is in constant need of care, maintenance and repair and, in view of its size and age, some of these demands are likely to be unpredictable in their timing and substantial in their content. The Friends' assets are available to be spent for the purposes of the Friends with the restrictions that the capital endowment funds are required to be invested to produce income and the restricted funds must be used for the purposes specified by the donors.

Income

The unrestricted income for 2024 totalled £43,698 which included bequests and legacies amounting to £1,572. Income from investments totalled £20,683 and continues to form an important part of the Friends' income.

Expenditure

£87,000 was paid in grants during the year, which included £80,000 for the maintenance of the fabric of the Abbey, and £7,000 for the Choral Scholarship Fund. Governance costs are met each year from subscriptions.

Funds and Maintenance Reserve

The Council continues its policy of maintaining income and reserves to fulfil its purpose to assist the Abbey, having regard to the obligations that it may be asked to assume. The unrestricted funds at 31 December 2024 totalled £419,792 which included two designated funds: a maintenance reserve of £200,000, and a designated fund for future grants of £174,000. The Maintenance Reserve has stayed consistent at £200,000; this level follows the guidelines set out by the Charity Commissioners. The value of investments increased by £22,355.

2021 Appeal

In October 2019 The Friends launched an Appeal to mark the 900th Anniversary of the consecration of the Abbey in 2021. The target is £202,100 to support a project to reorder the West end of the Abbey so as to provide a more open, light and welcoming entrance. No scheme for this has been agreed and with effect from 31st December 2024 the Friends have decided to suspend any more contributions to the fund until a definitive scheme can be agreed and time frame determined. For the time being all contributions will be retained in a Restricted Fund accruing interest from our investments. At 31st December 2024 £139,311 had been raised.

Support to PCC

Between 2014 and 2024 The Friends contributed £1.3 million to the PCC to complete some fabric work and to support a portion of the running costs. A further £0.2 million is pledged for 2025 and 2026. The Friends finances cannot sustain this level of support particularly given the turbulence on the global financial markets. Therefore from 2027 onwards we will be looking to reduce our financial support to no more than £40,000 per annum.

Subscriptions and Gift Aid

Many are finding finances difficult enough without further demands, but would you consider increasing the amount given if in a position to do so? Many of our Annual members contribute more than the basic £20 subscription and many Life members continue to pay a "subscription" as a donation to ongoing costs.

If tax is paid on your income then the value of your subscription and donations can be increased by 25% at no cost to you. A gift aid declaration is made once and then the Friends can claim the extra back from HMRC. What's more, if you pay higher rate tax your tax free allowance will be increased by the value of donations made under a gift aid declaration, so you will pay less tax. A gift aid declaration can be made on the Friends' website or using the rear leaf of the Friends' application form.

**Summarised Financial Statement and Balance Sheet
for the year ending 31 December 2024**

		2024	2023	2022	2021
		£	£	£	£
Income					
	Subscriptions, donations and legacies	17,969	28,927	25,266	57,440
	Investment income	20,683	22,856	26,367	25,561
	Cards, Events, Young Friends	5,046	4,942	6,428	2,008
	Total Income	43,698	56,725	58,061	85,009
Expenditure					
	Grants	87,000	90,519	168,434	143,809
	Other	11,771	11,450	8,695	6,568
	Total Expenditure	98,771	101,969	177,129	150,377
	Net gains/(losses) on investments	22,355	8,236	(75,896)	99,121
	Net Income/(Expenditure)	(32,718)	(37,008)	(194,964)	33,753
Fixed Assets					
	Investments	705,909	720,827	638,846	789,742
Current Assets					
	Stocks of books and cards	300	517	364	607
	Debtors	1,949	3,885	5,923	25,219
	Cash at bank and in hand	<u>5,648</u>	<u>21,852</u>	<u>137,816</u>	<u>162,760</u>
	Current assets sub-total	7,897	26,254	144,103	188,586
Liabilities					
	Creditors	(2,780)	(3,337)	(2,197)	(2,612)
	Net Current Assets	5,117	22,917	141,906	185,974
	Total Net Assets	711,026	743,744	780,752	975,716
Funds					
	Unrestricted Funds	419,792	457,754	505,166	699,419
	Restricted Funds	142,279	137,035	126,631	127,342
	Endowment Funds	148,955	148,955	148,955	148,955
	Total Funds	711,026	743,744	780,752	975,716

Mr Nigel Bennett, Hon Treasurer

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

held on Sunday 30th June 2024 at 2.00pm in the Parish Hall

Those present included: David Bagley, Jennifer Barrett, Tony Barrett, Alan Beagley, Marion Beagley, Babes Bennett, Nigel Bennett, Sylvia Burman-Hunt, Paul Charman, Jennie Clifford, David Coulton, Sue Coulton, Sue Counsell, Hilary Crowder, Ian Crowder, Andrew Crowther, Karen Feighan, Graham Finch, Mary Green, James Lancelot, Sylvia Lancelot, Ellie March, Austin Meares, Valerie Meares, Nancy Oakes, Joy Pegg, Colin Sawyer, Janice Smail, Ivan Steele, Richenda Steele, Hugh Sweet, Elizabeth Talbot, Kimball Talbot, Mary Talbot, Philip Talbot, Karen Vincent, Marc Vincent, Pat Webley, Ian White, Marsha White, Graham Whitehead, Charles Whitney, Margaret Wilson, Renée Young

Apologies: Joan Attewell, Basil Barke, June Barke, Christine Bennett, Hugh Bennett, Neil Birdsall, Howard Bluett, Nancy Bluett, Elizabeth Charman, George Charman, David Cresswell, Bill Evans, Steve Evans, Sue Evans, Patricia Fearnley, Glenny Garnett, James Garnett, Janet Harvey, Gareth Hill, Helen Hill, Pat Horsley, Simon Jones, Brenda Kimmins, Deitra Kimpton, Sandra Lanigan, David Lees, Keith Maudsley, Margaret Maudsley, Julia Maxlow-Tomlinson, Jonathan Milton, Peter Quinnell, Jackie Parrington, Stephen Phillips, Ken Powell, Sue Powell, Joanne Raywood, Hilary Reeves, Geoff Simpson, John Smith, Richard Southerden, Antoinette van der Horst, Jan van der Horst, Robin Wilson

Mr Graham Finch welcomed everyone to the meeting. He thanked all who had been involved in the morning's wonderful Friends Festival service, and all who provided food, and the catering team for overseeing the lunch.

The names were read of those Friends who have died, or whose deaths have been notified, since the last AGM:

Mrs Marjorie Asprey	The Revd Canon Dr Cyril Challice	Mrs Elizabeth Challice
Mr Malachy Cornwell-Kelly	Mrs June Hillier	Mr Victor Hoare
Lady Muriel Menzies	Miss Joan Nicholls	Miss KJ Rogers
Mr Michael Spencer	Dr Michael Sprackling	Mr Richard Turner
Miss VM Warner	Miss Mary Woolley	

A minute's silence was observed. The Revd Canon Nick Davies read the Friends' Meeting Prayer.

Minutes of AGM held on 2nd July 2023

Those present agreed that these were an accurate record of the meeting.

Report from outgoing Chair

Mr Graham Finch referred to his report for the year which was contained in the printed annual report for 2024. He asked the indulgence of those present to highlight one or two items.

Mr Finch commended the work of the Membership and Communications Committee under the chairmanship of Dr Ian White, and the work of the Friends' Administrator Mrs Karen Vincent, to develop and maintain all communications and recruitment tasks. A new website was launched earlier in the year with a members' area and electronic payments facilities. The committee has responsibility for ensuring legal compliance by the Friends; updated Privacy and GDPR policies have been produced. Under Charity Commission rules each charity must have its own Safeguarding Policy and this is being developed. Mr Finch thanked Mr Gareth Hill for writing a brief self-guided tour to the Abbey, highlighting the work of The Friends.

The most visible work of The Friends is organised through the Events Committee under the chairmanship of Mr Rafael Bellairs. There had been the excellent talk on major wood projects in churches by Mr Tim Jeffree and Professor Judith Green had delivered the Fitzhamon Lecture on the subject of Robert FitzHamon. A visit to Elgar's birthplace had included a private recital, with thanks to Dr James and Mrs Sylvia Lancelot for arranging this, and a Cheese and Wine Quiz evening organised by Mrs Marion Beagley had raised £1000 for The Friends. Special thanks is due to the catering team led by Mrs Janice Smail, who work tirelessly to provide refreshments for so many Friends activities.

The engine room of The Friends is the Finance and Investment Committee, where resources are carefully managed under the chairmanship of Mr Nigel Bennett. During the past year an arrangement has been put in place for £240,000 to be given over the course of the next 3 years to the Abbey Budget Recovery Plan to be applied to expenses on the Fabric of the Abbey. The Friends' investments are now under a professional manager, Rathbones. This is already paying dividends in the improved returns being received. Catastrophe has been averted by a successful challenge to a proposal by Lloyds Bank to close The Friends' bank account. Whilst there have been some behind the scenes changes it has been possible for a new account to be opened with the same sort code and account number so Friends' standing orders and stationery can remain as they are.

A highlight of the year was the Biennial Conference of Friends Organisations which was held in Hereford. Mr Finch appreciated the networking and sharing of ideas that these events provide, and it is encouraging to see that The Friends of Tewkesbury Abbey remain comparatively comfortably resourced and vigorously active. The speaker at the final dinner of the conference was The Very Revd Michael Tavinor, who made mention of Tewkesbury Abbey and its Friends in his talk.

The Friends' Scholar, Ellie March, was awarded her PhD in March this year. Those present applauded Dr March and Mr Finch thanked her for her ongoing commitment to the Abbey and its Friends.

Mr Finch stated that it had been a tremendous privilege to serve as Chair since first being elected to the role on 6th July 2014. On balance the past 10 years had held more occasions for joyful celebration than anxiety, and he hoped he has left his mark for the best. He concluded with thanks for all who have served on Council, especially those who have served as officers. He presented personal gifts and expressed his thanks to Mr Rafael Bellairs (Chair of Events), Mr Nigel Bennett (Treasurer), Dr Ian White (Vice Chair), Mrs Janice Smail (Friends' Table) and Mrs Karen Vincent (Administrator). All presentations were greeted with applause.

Mr Finch thanked those whose terms of office were ending this year and were standing down from Council: Mr David Bagley and Mr Stephen Evans.

Mr Finch conducted the Elections to Council. There were four vacancies for Council members and three nominations had been received:

Mr Rafael Bellairs, proposed by Mr Nigel Bennett, seconded by Dr Nancy Oakes

Mr John Goom, proposed by Dr Ian White, seconded by Ms Karen Feighan

Mrs Linda Parsons, proposed by Mr Hugh Sweet, seconded by Mrs Sue Coulton

The nominations were put to those present *en bloc* and by a show of hands all indicated their agreement.

The Treasurer, Vice-Chair and Chair are elected annually at the AGM. For each of these there was one nomination. Mr Finch read each proposal and those present confirmed the election with applause.

Treasurer: Mr Nigel Bennett, proposed by Mr Graham Finch, seconded by Dr Nancy Oakes

Vice-Chair: Dr Ian White, proposed by Mr Graham Finch, seconded by Mr Rafael Bellairs

Chair: The Revd Charles Whitney, proposed by Dr Ian White, seconded by Mr Graham Finch

Mr Finch thanked Fr Charles for agreeing for his name to go forward. He expressed his enormous gratitude to all Friends for their support and was greeted with applause. He stepped down from being the Chair and The Revd Charles Whitney took the Chair.

The Revd Charles Whitney thanked The Friends for their invitation, it was an honour and a challenge to take up the role. He invited Dr Andrew Crowther to give the vote of thanks to Mr Graham Finch on behalf of The Friends.

The text of the vote of thanks is an addendum to these minutes, and will be printed in the Friends' Annual Report 2025.

Gifts were given to Mr Finch by Mrs Karen Vincent on behalf of The Friends, and by The Revd Canon Nick Davies on behalf of the Abbey PCC. Mr Finch thanked all for their generosity.

Appointment of the Examiner

Mr Nigel Bennett confirmed that Mr Bull of BCP Partners Cheltenham had completed the work required to the satisfaction of all. Those present approved by show of hands that this appointment be maintained.

Treasurer's Report

Mr Nigel Bennett referred those present to the summary of incoming expenditure account and balance sheet of the Friends included in the Annual Report for 2024.

The appointment for the investment manager role had comprised identifying three candidates, interviewing two of them, and the unanimous selection of Rathbones. Their performance in the first 6 months of the role has been reasonable. One third of the holding is in stock market investment, and two-thirds is on the money markets.

It has taken about a year to get online banking established, and this has now been achieved but with some minor ongoing issues. Mr Bennett commended the perseverance of Mr Finch during a difficult period.

Mr Bennett reported that with the fabric fund grant now set for the next three years there is no free cash available. The finances are secure but The Friends are now focusing on replenishing their funds.

Mr Bennett thanked the Examiners for their help and those who have helped him in his role. He invited any questions on the accounts, and confirmed that full copies of the accounts are available.

The Revd Charles Whitney thanked Mr Bennett for his many hours of work and expertise.

It was requested of those present that the Accounts be formally adopted in line with Charity Commission requirements. This was proposed by Mr Nigel Bennett and seconded by Dr Andrew Crowther. All voted in favour.

Vicar's News

The Revd Canon Nick Davies was to be the afternoon speaker at Friends' Festival on the conclusion of the AGM and so no news was presented at the meeting.

Any Other Business

The Revd Charles Whitney announced that the first meeting in the new cycle of the Friends' Council would be held on Saturday 20th July. The focus of this meeting would be to set the dates of future meetings, to present any governance and constitutional matters, to agree committee membership and to raise the themes for the work of the Council for the year ahead.

The date of the Annual General Meeting in 2025 would be Sunday 29th June.

The meeting closed at 14:45

The Revd Canon Nick Davies gave a presentation to the Friends on the future proposals for the development of the Abbey as church, venue and tourist destination, and the application being made for Heritage Lottery Funding to further scope these developments.

The Festival concluded with afternoon tea and Evensong.

The Friends' Meeting Prayer

God our Creator, grant that your love may be present at our meeting,
so that what we say and do may be for the good of Tewkesbury Abbey and its Friends.

May we receive fresh encouragement in our labours, catch a wider vision,
and dedicate ourselves anew to the work to which you have called us.

We ask this in the name of Him who came not to be served, but to serve,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Programme for the Friends' Festival – Sunday 29th June 2025

10.30am Choral Eucharist

Preacher: The Revd Canon Dr Malcolm Brown,
lately Director of the Ministry and Public Affairs Division, Archbishops Council, Lambeth.

12.15pm Bring and Share Lunch

Please take your contribution to the Tea Room before the morning service.
Wine and soft-drinks will be provided.

2.00pm Annual General Meeting to be held in the Parish Hall, followed by

c.2.30pm Guest Speaker: The Revd Canon Dr Malcolm Brown

4.00pm Afternoon Tea

5.00pm Festival Evensong

Rear

The East End viewed from Abbey Lawn, and, inset, looking out through the west clerestory window of the eastern Lady Chapel

Photo credits: Ian White

The Lady Chapel which stood here was demolished around the time of the Dissolution of the Monasteries. The exact date and reason are not known for certain but this well known view conceals a secret. How many times have people looked at those windows and not realised that from inside, when looking to the east, that middle window has apparently disappeared. How can that be? The explanation lies in several structural changes to the building over time and in particular to the Lady Chapel. There is little documentary evidence but what we understand is that the missing window was allowing light into the Lady Chapel from an open roof space above the nave, not into the Abbey. Now that highly ornate window only lets light into a roof space over the ambulatory.

